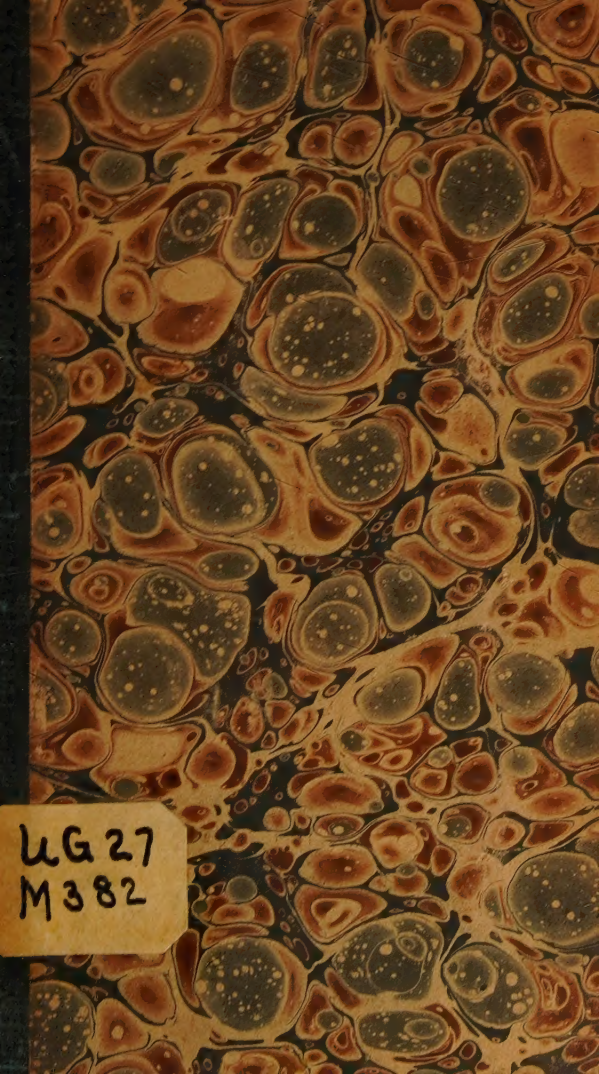




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M 382

COVENANT BLESSINGS

REALIZED.

*Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and
approved by the Committee of Publication.*



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COVENANT BLESSINGS REALIZED.

CHAPTER I.

Ellen Smith's inquiry.—Mrs. Smith's dilemma.—Reason why baptism would make a child better —Mr. and Mrs. Smith's state of mind.—Conversation between Mr. and Mrs. S.—An era in the family history —Family altar erected.—Ellen's remarks in after years.—Scripture.

“ I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever ; for the good of them and their children after them.” JER. 32 : 39.

“ MOTHER, did you ever give me to God when I was a little baby? inquired Ellen Smith one Sabbath afternoon, as she was returning home from meeting with her mother.

Mrs. Smith did not answer immediately, for painful thoughts were then agitating her mind, but little Ellen, unconscious of what was passing there, repeated her question, "*Did you, mother, give me to God, and did the minister take some water in his hand, and say: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen?* Ah, how still it was, and how pretty that dear little baby looked; and how beautifully Mr. Green prayed for it; and said it was consecrated to God, and then he prayed for Mr. and Mrs. Collingwood, and for all the baptized children. Mother, did he pray for me? Was I ever baptized?"

"No, Ellen, your parents are not members of the church; therefore they could not have you baptized."

Mrs. Smith quieted Ellen for a moment, with this reply; but not her own conscience.

She felt an uneasiness with regard to the performance of her maternal duties, which was not to be readily quieted. She could not charge herself with indifference to the

physical comfort or intellectual improvement of her children, but what had she done for their spiritual welfare; for their precious souls, which would never, never die? *Ah, what?* Conscience, with its customary faithfulness, when fully aroused, brought up to her recollection a frightful array of neglected duties, but seemed utterly at a loss to find any thing done with direct reference to the immortal destinies of her children; and the renewed inquiries of the little thinker by her side, did not relieve her difficulty.

After revolving her mother's answer for a moment in her mind, she asked, "Why are you not a member of the church, mother; Mr. Green would love to have you and father both, members of the church, wouldn't he?"

It was a hard thing to acknowledge to her child, that she had not the requisite qualifications for church membership, that she did not love God, and was not ready to obey his commands, and confess her wish to do so before the world; and Mrs. Smith

endeavored to evade her child's inquiry by turning her attention to something else. Do you remember what Mr. Green said in his sermon, Ellen?"

"No, mother, I kept thinking about that little baby, and wondering if I had ever been baptized as that was; and I thought if I had been, I must try to be a better child, or God would not love me, and I kept thinking about it, till I forgot that Mr. Green was preaching. I am sorry, mother, that you never gave me to God, shouldn't I be a better girl if you had?"

"That alone would not make you a better girl, Ellen, you must give yourself to God. Perhaps if you had been baptized, you would not think of it, and try to do better."

"But I should remember when Mr. Green prays for 'the dear baptized children,' and then, mother, I think I should feel very sorry to be doing wrong, and would try to be good, so that God might love and keep me, as Mr. Green said in his prayer to-day."

"I hope you will try now to be good,

my child, and teach Susan and George to be good children, too; if you are, God will love and bless you, though you have never been baptized."

Mrs. Smith had for some days been oppressed with a sense of sin against God, and danger to her soul. She had heard her friends and neighbors making the solemn inquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" She had seen many of them rejoicing in new-born hopes of pardoned sin, but as yet, she was without hope and without God, and her husband was in the same critical state; both having lived nearly through a powerful revival of religion without securing for themselves an interest in the atoning blood of Christ. She began to fear that the harvest would be past, the summer ended, and she not saved. The thought had alarmed her for several days, but now a new light seemed to have burst upon her mind, rendering the darkness and guilt of her situation tenfold more dreadful and aggravated. *She was a mother*, and while continuing in a state of impenitence, was not only endan-

gering her own salvation, but was, by her influence and example, preparing for eternal ruin the objects of her fondest love. To those for whose welfare she would have considered no personal sacrifice too costly, no self-denial too great, she felt that she was neglecting her first, and most imperative duty. Of their relations to God, and the obligations which grew out of those relations, they knew almost nothing. They had been taught that it was very wicked to steal, lie, speak bad words, and do many kindred things, but of the meaning of the term "wicked," their ideas were vague and indefinite.

"Thou God seest me," had never been the awe-inspiring thought of her children when tempted to sin, for it had never affected their mother to any great extent. She had ever sustained a fair moral character, was a good neighbor, kind friend, charitable to the poor, studied to promote the temporal comfort and prosperity of her family, and thought she was all, and doing all, that a merciful God would require of

her. But how different the estimate which she now forms of her past life and present course, when the Spirit's power is felt upon her heart and conscience. She no longer seeks to justify herself, but tremblingly inquires how she may best discharge the weighty responsibilities resting upon her.

It was a mild winter evening, and Ellen, our inquisitive little friend, with all the juvenile members of the family, were wrapt in refreshing slumber, Mr. Smith, closing his book and drawing his chair a little nearer to the fire, sat for a moment, apparently absorbed in watching the rapidity with which the flame, flickering, playing, and lightly encircling the recent pride of the forest, completed its destruction. Whatever the moral to be drawn from the view, he did not speak of it, but turning suddenly towards his wife, who occupied a seat on the other side of the table, and was engaged in reading her Bible, he said, smilingly, "Ellen's questions, this afternoon, were rather embarrassing, were they not Lucy?"

"Yes, they were," she frankly answered,

“but not more so than my own thoughts have been since. I sometimes fear that we are withholding from our children blessings which the Collingwoods are securing for theirs. We have been living for this world only, while they are preparing for another and a better one. And the consequences of our conduct, whatever they are, must be shared by our precious children. They will become what we are, and do as we do, rather than as we teach them, if we, like the Pharisees, say and do not. I have felt to-day, as I never did before, my responsibility as a mother; *a prayerless mother*; and have they not a *prayerless father*, too? Hapless children, whose nearest and dearest friends seek not for them the friendship and protection of Him, who alone can shield and save. My dear husband, shall we continue in this way, without hope for ourselves, or a Friend to whom we can go and implore blessings on the immortal beings committed to our care? What shall we do?”

Mr. S. It seems to me, Lucy, that we

are approaching a crisis, which will determine with us, the everlasting future. The thought has at times of late, been almost insupportable. But why need we hesitate any longer; why continue to reject the precious invitations of the gospel, and grieve away the Holy Spirit? I have thought much lately of our ingratitude to God, at least, of my ingratitude. So blessed as I am in my family, in health, in moral and religious privileges, in all respects, and so often called by the influences of the Holy Spirit to make the only return in my power; and the one which it would seem I could not refuse to make. I have trembled lest I should be left to enjoy my portion in this life only; and then again I have felt as if a portion here could not be granted longer, but justice must sweep away the treasures around my fireside, and leave me to the poverty and desolation which my ingratitude so richly deserves.

The baptism of Mr. Collingwood's child this afternoon, awakened in my heart likewise, some keen reflections. Whether it is

a duty thus to consecrate our children or not, the evident desire of those parents to train up their children for heaven, led me to feel deeply my guilt as a husband and a father. I have looked with affectionate pride upon my wife and sprightly, healthful children, but I have done nothing to assist either in fulfilling the great end for which we were all created; and I fear, Lucy, that if we suffer this season to pass away unimproved, we shall never secure a personal interest in the Saviour ourselves; and we may be the means of shutting the door of heaven against our dear children."

Before Mr. Smith or his wife retired to rest that night, they resolved that, by the help of Divine grace, they would commence a new life, and strive to bring up their family in the fear of the Lord. Together, for the first time, they knelt before a throne of mercy, and sent up their broken petitions for strength and grace to enable them to keep their resolutions, and live henceforth to Him, who had so loved them as to give his life for them. And now it did not ap-

pear so difficult a thing to give the heart to Christ; they only wondered how they could do otherwise than love Him; so lovely; so holy; so boundless in goodness and compassion did He appear. Oh, what could so long have steeled their hearts against Him? What could have rewarded such love as His with base ingratitude? Hateful indeed did sin appear to these awakened souls, and most heartily did they loathe and abhor that, which had so long separated between them and their God.

An era was this in the family of the Smiths, which will be remembered in that day when the jeweled diadem shall be completed, the number of the redeemed made up, and heaven's arches resound with the praises of redeeming love. Yes, and when eternal ages have rolled away, they shall go back to the hour that witnessed the freedom of their prisoned souls from the dominion of sin, and strike anew their golden harps in praise of the grace which thus distinguished them.

And well do the three oldest children,

Lucius, Ellen, and Susan, love to look back upon that morning, that Monday morning, though they say it seems to have been a lovely Sabbath morning, so still and solemn it was, when their father seated himself with his Bible immediately after breakfast, instead of going out to work, as had been his custom. While wondering what it meant, their mother said to a girl, "You may leave the table as it is, Betsey, for a little time, while we attend to long neglected duties." "Come, Georgy, sit down by mother, and Susan may take her little chair and place it on the other side." Lucius and Ellen did not wait to be told, but quietly seated themselves with Betsey opposite their father. Years afterward, Ellen remarked: "Memory has garnered up, among her choicest treasures, every incident of that eventful morning. The very expression of my father's countenance, as he bent over the sacred page, is before me now, and I hear him, in slightly tremulous tones, declare his intention to erect in his family, an altar to the Lord, whom he had

too long neglected to worship, "and I would," he added, "take every member of my household with me to the Saviour. From his bountiful Hand has come every blessing that we enjoy; henceforth let us daily and unitedly acknowledge his goodness. Good when he gives, and may we learn to feel that he will not be less so if he withholds." The deep well-spring in my dear mother's heart gushed up, and suffused her dark, serious eyes with tears; but I felt then, that they were not tears of sorrow, and my own little heart throbbed with sympathetic emotions. Emotions of serious, solemn delight, which seemed to impress even little, blithesome Georgy, who never, in all his life before, was seen to sit and fold his little hands in silence, and at the same time looking as contented and happy, as if he felt that a new and bright page in the family history had been opened before him.

Precious season, well may it be remembered by those whom it has so richly blessed."

“I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” Gen. 18: 19.

“These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deut. 6: 6, 7.

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” James 4: 8.

“Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.” Heb. 10: 22.

CHAPTER II.

Subjects of the revival profess religion.—Obstacles in their way.—

Mr Smith's early prejudices against infant baptism.—Sincere inquiries after the path of duty.—Mr. Smith's feelings upon the subject.—Good effect of a knowledge of early consecration to God.—Families which enjoyed covenant blessings during the revival.—A friendly call.—Mrs. Collingwood's views of infant baptism.

“He is the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.” DEUT. 7: 9.

A FEW weeks passed away, and those who had, during the revival, experienced the pardoning mercy of God, came forward and united themselves with his people, publicly avowing their determination to live “henceforth not unto themselves, but unto Him, who died for them, and rose again.” Many parents were of this number, and

bringing their households with them, they publicly consecrated them to God in the ordinance of baptism. About sixty individuals on the faith of their parents or their own, were that day sprinkled with baptismal water, by the venerable pastor, who had guided many of them to the Saviour, whom they now delighted to honor and obey.

Long since has that single-hearted, devoted servant of Christ been permitted to welcome some of these spiritual children to the portals of heaven, and present them to his Saviour, as the fruits, through grace, of his prayers and tears, and labors here; and as one after another arrived at the gate of heaven, he has heard the angelic choir shout, "Glory, glory to Him who enabled these blood-bought souls to come off conquerors over death and hell and win the immortal prize."

Others yet wear their earthly garbs, but give pleasing evidence that the solemn transactions of that day, upon which men and

angels, yes, and devils, too, gazed with interest, were not in vain. The sacred covenant registered in their hearts, has not been hidden beneath the rubbish of worldly accumulations, as they passed on their way, but frequently renewing, contemplating it, and rejoicing in the faithfulness of Him, with whom it was made, they look forward to the time when they, too, shall cast their crowns of victory at the feet of Jesus, and join the loud hallelujahs of those who have gone before.

But were our friends, the Smiths, participators in the scenes of that never to be forgotten day? They were not, but they were deeply interested spectators. They had never, for a moment, regretted the decision, which they had made, and now felt desirous of confessing before the world their attachment to Christ and his cause, but there were some points of duty upon which they did not feel settled. The only church, at that time in S. where they resided, insisted upon the duty of infant baptism. All

Mr. Smith's early prejudices and associations were against it. In early life, he had worshiped with those who thought it unscriptural; and since he came to S. and worshiped with a Congregational church, he thought that many of those parents, who presented their children at the baptismal font, seemed to consider that with the act, the work was done; nor did some with whom he conversed, appear to understand very well why they did even that. It was required by the church to which they belonged, and secured to their children its prayers, and they believed other blessings, but what they hardly knew; they believed it a duty and privilege thus to offer their children to the Lord in baptism, but upon what authority they grounded this belief, he found many unable definitely to say.

These observations had been made, and these conversations held, before he felt any special interest in the subject of religion, but he felt their influence still, and wished to settle the question of *duty* before he took

any decisive steps. Mr. Smith and his wife were sincere inquirers after the will of the Lord. They believed that if it were the *will of the Lord* that christian parents should consecrate their children to Him in baptism, it could be proved from Scripture, and if this were a duty, it involved other obligations which could not be safely neglected. "It seems to me," said he one day to Mrs. Smith, "but solemn mockery to consecrate a child to the Lord in baptism, to place upon its brow a sacred seal, and never afterwards allude to that act in training it. I should think it ought to be a powerful motive, to be kept before parent and child, in restraining it from sinful indulgences. But how many have been professedly given to the Lord, and then trained for the world, allowed to grow up with the least possible knowledge of their obligations as consecrated children, while in all the pursuits and amusements followed by the impenitent, they run a free course, so far as the fact of their having been given

to God in infancy is concerned.” “Yes,” returned Mrs. Smith, “the training of many baptized children is certainly very inconsistent with the vows which the parents assumed at their baptism, whether it was done understandingly or not; but of course you do not consider that as any argument against it. The very fact that we expect more from baptized children than from any others, and notice more particularly any inconsistencies in their conduct, is in favor of it. And I think if we look about us at the subjects of the late revival, we shall find that a very large proportion were those who had been baptized in infancy. I was struck with the fact that very few of the parents, who were admitted to the church last Sabbath, received the ordinance of baptism. They had been given to God in their infancy by believing parents, and now came with their households to redeem the pledge made in their behalf, and to renew it themselves in behalf of their children. For myself, I can truly say, that I have often, in

early life, been restrained from indulgences, in which I could see no harm, by a knowledge of the early consecration of which I had been the subject. My parents were professors of religion; they had publicly given me to God, and promised to educate me in all respects for Him. I felt that more was required of me than if I had not been thus consecrated to his service, and I knew that I was in danger of bringing a reproach upon the religion of my parents, which I believed was the religion of Christ, by indulging in amusements common to those of my age. I do not say that I found this restraint less irksome than I now believe it was wholesome. If, as we must admit, many parents who have their children baptized neglect their religious training, there are others, a large number, too, I trust, who recognize their obligations; strive in some good degree to fulfill them, and enjoy the blessing of God in their families.

I am told that Mr. Langdon and his wife have ever seemed to realize their responsi-

bilities as the parents of children consecrated to the Lord. Jane, you know, became pious several years ago, and has ever been very exemplary in her christian deportment. During the revival that we have now enjoyed, how wonderfully has that family been blessed. All the remaining children, five daughters and a son, have become hopeful Christians. I think last Sabbath must have been a day of deep, soul-stirring interest to their parents. I could not help thinking of them in contrast with their next door neighbors, Mr. Ezra Baynton's family. There are four children of ungodly parents. Mary and Emily were awakened, and the two boys seemed for a time to be seriously impressed with the importance of attending to the welfare of their souls. Much conversation upon the subject of religion has been held with them, and many prayers offered in their behalf; and it sometimes seemed, as Mrs. Collingwood remarked, as if they were not far from the kingdom of heaven, but they have allowed

the world, in some form, to come between them and God, and now appear to have given up all concern for their souls. How different the case in Deacon Sanborn's family. There parental faithfulness seems to have been rewarded and they are permitted to rejoice in the conversion of all their children except the two youngest. Lucien, who was one of the first that indulged a hope, and probably you recollect, has decided that it is his duty to devote himself, if life and health are spared, to the work of the ministry; and he is about commencing a course of study preparatory to entering college.

Deacon Ames' family, Mr. Stevens,' Capt. George's, and Mr. Alden's, have all been richly blessed. I do think that we shall find, as a general thing, that those, who from time to time become members of the church, are from those families who practice infant baptism, and train up their children in a manner consistent with that solemn dedication.

Mr. S. But do you not believe that those Christian parents, who regard infant baptism as unscriptural, may train up their children aright, and enjoy the blessing of God?

Mrs. S. Doubtless they will be blessed so far as they faithfully and conscientiously perform their duty; but if they neglect the performance of any duty, the blessing which would result from such performance, they cannot of course enjoy.

Mr. S. Ah, Mrs. Collingwood, how do you do? Your coming at this time is quite opportune; walk in, if you please.

Mrs. C. It is certainly very pleasant to know that a friendly call, is a seasonable one, but what renders mine particularly so at this time?

Mr. S. We were just conversing upon infant baptism; a subject, in which, I believe you are deeply interested, and we shall feel very much obliged, if you will give us some of the reasons which have influenced you and your husband in the very

successful course which you have pursued with your children; for I am sure in your family it has not been a mere form.

Mrs. C. Most willingly; to begin with myself. I was brought up, as you know, Mrs. Smith, a Congregationalist, and by parents, who not only deemed it a solemn duty, but a great privilege, as members of Christ's visible church, to pledge themselves publicly to God and the church, to train up their children for his service, and to have this covenant sealed with baptismal water. As soon as I was old enough, they endeavored to make me understand the nature and design of the ordinance in which I had been given to God; they labored to impress me with a deep sense of the solemn relation in which I stood to my Maker, and I cannot remember the time when I was not influenced, in a greater or less degree, by a sense of my obligations to fulfill *my* part of that covenant into which my parents had entered in my behalf. I felt encouraged to seek, and anxious to

secure, at an early age, the blessings which I was taught to expect from the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.

Mr. Smith. It is very natural for us to adopt the belief of those in whose wisdom and goodness we have been accustomed to place entire confidence, especially if the result of that belief has been just what we were taught to expect, but did you never feel any anxiety to know whether the ordinance, which was so blessed to you, was a doctrine of the Bible?

Mrs. C. I never doubted that it was; but when, soon after our marriage, we were visited by some Baptist friends from a neighboring state, who seemed to take some considerable interest in conversing upon our denominational differences, I determined to make myself acquainted with all that the Bible contained in favor of an ordinance, which, it seemed to me, enjoyed the smiles of Heaven. I had my reasons for believing it a Divine appointment, but they did not amount to a "Thus saith the Lord;" and I

believe my good friends rather rejoiced in what they considered an advantage over me.

Mr. S. But do your reasons now, *Mrs. Collingwood*, amount to a "Thus saith the Lord?" Surely he has nowhere commanded us to present our unconscious offspring to him in baptism.

Mrs. C. No, not in so many words, but I believe, and I rejoice in the belief, that his instructions on this point are so explicit as to be equivalent to a command. But my time is limited now. Come over to our house this evening, and we will converse again upon this subject. In the meantime, if you will give me a Bible, I will mark some passages that have much to do with it, which you may, if you please, consult at your leisure. My object in calling this morning, was to invite you, *Mrs. Smith*, to meet several ladies at our house this afternoon to pray, especially, for our children. Can you not make it convenient to stay with me after the meeting, and will not

you, Mr. Smith, join us at tea? We shall then have the evening to ourselves, and can enter more freely into a consideration of this deeply interesting subject.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith cordially assented to this proposition; and after their kind friend had taken leave, Mr. S. read to his wife the following passages of Scripture, which she had marked.

“I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” Gen. 17: 7. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Gal. 3: 17. “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be im-

puted to them also.” Rom. 4: 11: “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law; but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.” Rom. 4: 16, 17. “And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.” Acts 16: 14, 15.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Collingwood.—Prayer-meeting of Mothers.—The Mother's duty.—Commencing right.—We live for eternity.—Evening worship in Mr. Collingwood's family.—Mr. S. finds no difficulty in the mode of baptism.—What is signified by infant baptism.—Conditions of the Abrahamic covenant.—Seal of the covenant changed. Blessings of the gospel to woman.—Early impressions most enduring.—Denial that the covenant with Abraham was a spiritual covenant.—All are not Israel that are of Israel.—Identity of the church not affected by it.—Abraham the father of all true believers.—A privilege and duty to consecrate children to God in baptism. Scripture.

“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me ; for thou art the God of my salvation ; on thee do I wait all the day.”—Ps. 25 : 5.

Mrs. COLLINGWOOD mentioned to her husband the arrangement which she had made with the Smiths, and expressed a hope that he would be able to devote the evening to them. “I could not,” she added, very well consult you before making the engagement.”

Mr. C. replied that he should be at liberty, and would be happy to see them; he was very glad to find them inquiring after duty, and anxious to perform it understandingly; he believed the duty of infant baptism to be as clearly taught in the Bible, as the duty of family prayer, and he supposed no christian would question the duty of erecting in his house the family altar.

Dear Mrs. Collingwood, with her warm, sunshining heart going out to every living thing which bore the impress of her Creator's hand, but more especially and devotedly to those who loved her Saviour, and were seeking to learn and do his will, was ever devising good. She knew full well that as the Christian commences his race heavenward, so he is very apt to continue in it; and she felt very anxious that those who had just come into her Master's vineyard, should be active laborers there, honoring their Master and enriching their own souls by improving the talents committed to their care.

It was this, which led her to collect a little circle of mothers at her house, most of them newly born into the kingdom of her Lord, and try to encourage them in her mild, persuasive manner, to the performance of their varied duties as christian women. "Let us," said she; "speak often one to another as we go on our way, upon subjects pertaining to the glorious hopes and prospects before us. We have often communicated freely and unreservedly respecting our worldly comforts and cares, hopes and fears; shall we speak less freely or frequently, upon those things which affect our immortal interests? I trust not. Let us ever keep the end in view,—the great object for which we live, let us keep constantly before us. There are many trials before us, many difficulties to be encountered before we get home to the mansions prepared for us on high. But we may do much, by mutual counsel, sympathy and united prayer, to sustain and cheer each other in our journey onward. The

christian pathway is not *all* strewed with flowers, though there are many bright clusters scattered here and there, to refresh and gladden his heart by their beauty and delicious odors if he will but stoop to gather them.

And to each of us, dear sisters, is committed the care of choice, perennial plants to be cultivated for God. Whether these sweet flowers shall gather freshness and beauty under our culture, and finally be prepared to adorn the courts of heaven, depends very much upon us; upon what we make our homes; upon the influences with which we surround them, the spirit which we infuse into them. What shall they be? We know there is but one alternative; if not blooming in heaven, they must be withering for ever and ever under the curse of God in the abode of despair. This is a spot where all embarrassment, all restraint can be laid aside. We are *mothers*. Have we not one errand to the throne of grace? That wisdom which is profitable

to direct, we all need to enable us to train up our children for God; and their conversion to Him, is a blessing upon which we must set our hearts, and labor and pray till we obtain it. He is faithful that hath promised.

I feel very desirous that those of us who are just commencing a christian course, should commence aright; as we shall wish that we had when reviewing it at the close. I thought there was much truth in the remark made by our pastor last Tuesday at the conference, "that the first year of our christian life, is usually a type of those which follow." How important then, that we set our standard high at the outset; and endeavor from the first to live up to it. Let Christ be indeed our great Exemplar, and though we fail to reach our standard, we shall approximate much nearer to it, than if we aim at any thing short of a perfectly holy life. May our dear children, and those most intimately acquainted with us, see in each of us a bright reflection of

our Saviour's character; and while our little ones regard their parents as models for their imitation, may the spirit which guides us, be infused into their hearts, and they become themselves lovely examples of early piety."

"Yes," rejoined Mrs. Green, very much, perhaps the salvation of many souls, depends upon the manner in which we, however humble or obscure our station may be, exemplify the spirit and temper of Christ. We may train Samuels, Elijahs, Daniels, and Timothys, to whom the honor of God, and the salvation of souls, shall be dearer than the concentrated wealth of worlds; or we may, by an example at variance with our teachings, educate children of this world, who shall not only seek and find their own portion here, but shall be the means of alluring others away to wander upon the dark mountains of death. An unguarded expression, a thoughtless act, trivial, perhaps, and forgotten as soon as performed, by the mother, may be recorded

in living characters on the heart of the little observer at her side, and become an essential ingredient in the formation of his character, not for time merely, but for eternity. And this is what renders our situation peculiarly solemn and interesting. What we do is for *eternity*. According to the seed that we sow in the young and tender heart, by our daily tempers, conduct, and conversation, will the gathering of the harvest be, when angels are the reapers."

The meeting that day was closed with a humble, earnest prayer by Mrs. Smith, for guidance, grace, and wisdom from above, that they might all discharge the duties incumbent on them in a manner acceptable to Him, who requires no more of his people, than by his grace assisting them, they are able to perform.

It was the custom in Mr. Collingwood's family to have their evening worship immediately after tea, before the younger children had retired to rest; and the presence of strangers never interfered with this

arrangement. "Where," he would say, "can we spend a little time more appropriately with our friends than at a throne of grace?" Without the blessing of heaven our social privileges may become a snare and lead us into sin."

But now the hour of prayer is past, the kind "good night," is spoken, and Thomas, James, and little curly headed Fanny, are snugly ensconced in their warm beds. Mary and Susan are washing up the "tea things," and William is busy doing up the "chores" for the night. While they are all engaged in the kitchen, let us step into the parlor. Here we find our friends and neighbors seated around a cheerful fire, and earnestly engaged in conversation. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Collingwood are busy with their knitting needles, for in those days work in the parlor was not unfashionable in S. and ladies boasted more of knitting their own stockings than they did of wearing the product of the loom. But what interests this little circle so much that Mrs.

Smith has really laid her work down in her lap, and seems listening with very serious attention to something that Mr. Collingwood is saying.

Mr. C. Then you feel no difficulty respecting the mode of baptism?

Mr. S. No; I think Mr. Green made it pretty clear in his sermon a few Sabbaths since, that the word baptize, means to immerse, no more than it does to wash, wet, or sprinkle, and with him, I do not believe that our Saviour would institute an ordinance to be observed in all the world where the gospel should be preached and received, and prescribe a mode of administering it, which would, in many circumstances be imprudent, and in many places impracticable. My difficulty is on the subject of infant baptism. If baptism is an outward sign of an inward cleansing, why should it be applied to those who are not only destitute of this cleansing, but unconscious of their need of it?

Mr. C. When baptism is applied to an

infant, we believe it signifies its need of internal purification; and in thus dedicating it to the Lord, we pledge ourselves to seek for it the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, and so far as our authority or influence can affect it, to train it up for the kingdom of heaven.

Mr. S. But where do you get your authority for administering baptism in this way? We have no examples in the New Testament of christian baptism, except as a sign of regeneration.

Mr. C. I beg your pardon, neighbor, but I think we have in the case of Lydia, a very decisive proof that baptism was administered to her household upon *her* profession of faith; and those who are acquainted with the language in which the New Testament was originally written, say that it is very obvious that the jailer *only*, believed, and that his household were baptized on *his* profession of faith; just as, in the ancient church, the male infants were circumcised on account of their pa-

rents' faith. And I think we may fairly infer the same of the household of Stephanus, baptized by Paul, though nothing definite is said about it.

Mrs. S. Yet, in the household of Lydia there might not be any infants.

Mr. C. But, my dear madam, if we could prove that to have been the case, does it make any difference? As soon as Lydia became herself a servant of God, she consecrated her household to his service without regard to age. All under her control or influence were pledged to the Lord in baptism. Thus it was in the covenant made with Abraham. He not only received the seal himself, but it was applied to all the male members of his household on account of his faith, and this by the command of God, who said, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep be-

tween me and you and thy seed after thee, every man-child among you shall be circumcised. Here the thing is put for the sign, or token as it is called in the following verse, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you."

Mrs. C. In the covenant of the church made with Abraham, we have the special command of God to consecrate the babes to his service, and our Saviour seems to confirm the privilege to his followers, when he says, "Suffer the *little* children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God." Under the old dispensation they had enjoyed the peculiar blessings and privileges of the covenant, and under the new, they are to sustain the same relation to the church of Christ. The covenant is the same, though the seal is changed from circumcision to baptism, and is to be applied to all believers, or children of believers, whether male or female; for all are one in Christ Jesus.

Mrs. S. Woman might well be last at

the cross and first at the sepulchre; for to the gospel dispensation, she is indebted for an enlargement of *all* her privileges. How striking the contrast between the christian female and the Jewish, and indeed between the Christian female and every other where the gospel has not been preached and its teachings recognized.

Mr. C. Yes, and this restoration, by the gospel, of woman to the rank and station assigned her by her Maker, when he gave her to be the helpmeet and companion of Adam, has been one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon our sex. The intellectual and moral elevation of man, his dignity and happiness depend, in no small degree, upon the social condition and moral character of woman. Our moral characters are usually but a transcript of hers who wrote the first lessons that we learned in imperishable characters upon our hearts. Intercourse with the world may deface, deepen, or so change and modify, that when the sapling becomes an oak, the early

fireside impressions will hardly be recognized by her who made them, yet distinct and powerful they are, and will remain through an immortal existence, for good or evil. How little does the christian woman, the christian mother, even now, realize her true position. What mothers are in this age, men will be in the next, in their most essential elements of character. Shall they be educated for earth, or heaven? For time merely, or for eternity? A weighty responsibility, which she cannot throw off, rests upon her, to whom is entrusted the *first years* of the future man. Whether he be the *patriot* statesman, the *just* ruler, the God-fearing divine, or the reckless teacher of soul-destroying error, depends very much upon the principles which guide his mother. It is not so much what she says, as what she does; not so much what she would appear to be, as what she *is*, that becomes the moulding influence, the impressions engraven as with the point of a diamond upon imperishable parchment.

Mrs. C. Viewed in this aspect, the relations sustained by woman become deeply interesting. How important that she should, not only be well trained, intellectually and morally, but realizing her weakness and inefficiency in her best estate, sit daily at the feet of Jesus, listening to his instructions, striving to catch his spirit, and imploring his grace to enable her to meet her obligations, to be holy in heart and life. May we realize our weakness more and more, and seek for help from Him, in whom is all our sufficiency; and while we are permitted to dedicate to his service, the buds of immortality placed in our hands, may we ever realize that they must be educated by precept and example for Him to whom they belong, if we would have them shed a healing balm in the path of life, or prepared to flourish in the garden of God above. But we are digressing widely from our subject.

Mr. S. You speak of the covenant with Abraham, as the covenant of the

church; but many, as you are doubtless aware, deny that it was a spiritual covenant, or that there was any such thing as a church among the Jews, that is, a separate body of true saints; and who also believe that we have no proof that baptism takes the place of circumcision.

Mr. C. Can we say that there "is a separate body of true saints" now? Are there not in the church of Christ, many who have a name to live and are dead? So there were in the Jewish church, among the people called by God to come out and be separate from the world, and chosen as his "peculiar people," many who did not fulfill their part of the covenant made with their father Abraham, and consequently fell short of the promised blessings; but that did not affect the identity of the church. In Acts 7:38, she is called "the church in the wilderness." What more is the church required to be now; what more can she be, than God required his peculiar people to be, whom he chose and set apart

for himself. Read Ex. 19: 5, 6. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests; and a holy nation." Also Deut. 26: 16, 19. "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in *his ways*, and to *keep his statutes*, and his *commandments*, and his *judgments*, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he has promised thee, and that thou shouldst *keep all his commandments*; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God as he hath spoken." The covenant which

God made with Abraham he declares to be an *everlasting* covenant, which should be with him and his seed after him; and St. Paul says; "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. The law given four hundred and thirty years after the Lord had promised Abraham that he would be a God to him and to his seed after him, cannot set this promise aside or render it ineffectual.

Abraham, we are frequently told in the New Testament is the "father of all them that believe." Rom. 4: 11. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; *that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.*" Lu. 19: 9. "And Jesus said unto him; This day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." John 8: 39.

They answered and said unto him ; Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them ; If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Gal. 3 : 7, 29. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Now if Abraham is the father of all them that believe, if the covenant was made an *everlasting* covenant with Abraham and with his seed after him ; and the seal of that covenant was circumcision, which God commanded should be received not only by Abraham, but by all his male children, does it not follow that if we are believers in Christ, that covenant is with *us* and *our children*? And are we not bound to receive the seal whatever it may be? With regard to the substitution of baptism for circumcision, we are not told that Christ said in so many words ; "You need no longer perform the painful, bloody rite

of circumcision, but instead of it, baptism shall henceforth be a seal of the covenant between you and your God;" but what was said and done by Christ and his Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament, is to my mind equivalent to this. His last command to his disciples as he was about to leave them, was; "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to *every creature baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Now, if he had not intended that those who should embrace the gospel, should come with their households and receive baptism, as, under the old dispensation the males had received circumcision, this command would certainly have been given in different words, or with some qualification.

Under the old dispensation, we find proselytes to the Jewish religion circumcised, they and theirs. Under the new dispensation, we find the Apostles applying to proselytes the seal of baptism; why not that of

circumcision also, if one had not been substituted for the other? The coming of Christ relieved his people from many burdens, some rites and ceremonies which his coming rendered no longer necessary; but he confirms the covenant made with the father of believers and his children, and directs that the seal of that covenant should henceforth be baptism. Had he wished to exclude children from it now, he would have repealed the command given to Abraham; but no; the promise is still to you and your children." The ever blessed Saviour says; Forbid them not to come unto me." Shall *we* do it?

Yes; my friend, I believe that the duty of christian parents to consecrate their children to the Lord in baptism; publicly acknowledging their need of the washing of regeneration, and seeking the fulfillment of the promise made to the father of believers and his seed, pledging themselves to perform their part of the covenant; is an imperative one; and to him who rightly

understands his duty, it is also an invaluable privilege.

To place my child, as it were, in the arms of my Saviour, to consecrate to him, to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the treasure, which, for a time has been entrusted to my care; to implore the blessing of the triune God upon it, and upon me, while I strive to fit it for his service; to ensure, by this public dedication of my child, the prayers and coöperation of my minister and of my christian brethren and sisters, is a favor of no trifling value; and I feel that if I am faithful to my trust, it will secure to my little ones the fulfillment of the promise, which is not only to me, but to my children.

Mr. S. Well, neighbor Collingwood, I thank you for your patience and kindness; and I must acknowledge you have much Scripture in support of your belief. I can readily conceive the good influence of infant baptism upon the subject of it, if parents are faithful to their trust, and to its

salutary influence upon spectators, both Mrs. Smith and myself can bear testimony.

Mr. C. I think when you have studied the Word of inspiration with particular reference to this subject, you will feel *no doubts* respecting your duty. May the Lord guide you in your search after truth, and strengthen you in every good word and work to do his will.

Mr. S. Thank you; but I see Mrs. Smith has rolled up her knitting work, which means, I suppose, that our steps should follow her thoughts—homeward.

Mrs. S. I do not like to keep Betsey up waiting for us until it is late, as she has had considerable to do to-day and needs rest.

Mr. C. I commend you for that, Mrs. Smith, we are never to seek our own comfort and gratification at the expense of the rights and privileges of our fellow beings, even though we may have certain claims upon them. But while you are getting ready, I will just note a few passages of

Scripture which Mr. Smith may read with profit, in connection with those, that we have already considered.

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.” Rom. 4: 16. ‘The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” Ps. 103: 17, 18. “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Ps. 44: 3. “They are the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.” Isa. 65: 23. “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Rom. 15: 8.

CHAPTER IV.

Lapse of time.—Greater changes within, than around the dwellings in S.—The old church.—The former pastor gone to his reward. Did not go alone to heaven.—Grave yard.—Names of the departed. Example of godly parents a rich legacy.—Mrs. Collingwood's faith. Result of parental faithfulness.—Mrs. Aiken—incident of her childhood.—Mr. Smith's christian course.—A christian's death.—Emily Baynton.—Scripture.

“The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.” Prov. 20 : 7.

WINTER laid aside his snowy mantle, and smiling Spring, decked himself in robes of richest green. From hill and dale, from the budding tree-top, and the ice-freed pool, a thousand voices welcomed her approach. She came and went; but an elder sister, a gay, laughing maiden, scattering her treasures with a profuse hand, succeeded her; and all nature again rejoiced. But she

too, soon disappeared, and a sober matron in russet garb, came in her stead, realizing to the friends of her predecessors the golden promises which they had made. Rich stores of the good things which God bestows upon the diligent husbandman, were safely garnered for future need, when Autumn gave place to the king of frosts and storms.

A score of times save one, have the seasons thus blessed the dwellers in S. since the evening that we occupied a seat in Mr. Collingwood's parlor, and listened to the conversation between the neighbors on the subject of infant baptism. A temporary sojourn in the same place has enabled us to gather further intelligence respecting those who interested us at that time.

Among a people mostly given to agricultural pursuits, time has wrought but few *apparent* changes. An old creaking sign welcomes the weary traveler to the same village inn, that furnished him with a supper and a bed, twenty years ago; and you

might imagine the same host welcomed you, only a little younger and his face is not so plump and red, as the old landlord's; the bar is no longer there; thrice blessed result of the temperance reformation. The same store supplies the inhabitants with the few necessities which they do not go "out of town" to purchase; but it is not the same individual who stands behind the counter, that used to replenish our needle books and pin cushions. And if we step within many of these familiar looking farm houses we shall find that father Time has left many traces of his footsteps there. In many indeed, he seems to have left fac similes of our old friends, but *they* are not there. There is the old church; that indeed looks neglected and old. Well do I remember its interior, the square old fashioned pews, where I used to sit bolt upright, sometimes resting my head for a moment upon the top of the high railing; and those seats like a chest lid, always raised in time of prayer, for people had not then got into

the irreverent habit of sitting in church, during this exercise; and dropped simultaneously at the close by the whole congregation; making a clatter sufficient to arouse all, sleepily disposed, for the rest of the service. Indeed, that is all the good that I could ever see resulted from having those seats on hinges. I recollect very well when our good minister, perhaps not appreciating this advantage, requested the congregation not to raise their seats during the time of prayer, or if they did to use a little care in letting them down again. For a time the stillness at the close of this service, was almost as impressive as the clatter, clatter, clatter had ever been.

But the walls of the old church have long since ceased to echo the voice of the preacher. A neat white edifice nearly opposite now accomodates those who go up to the sanctuary upon the holy day. Nor is the voice longer heard which in the spring time of my life, used to speak from the ancient desk, in tones that seemed to

search my heart. His white locks, which to him, were indeed "a crown of glory," have been laid away in the cold and silent tomb; but the spirit which animated that revered form is now before the throne clothed with immortal youth and beauty. He did not go alone to heaven. Oh who would spend their threescore years and ten in this world of sin and trial, and then go *alone* to heaven, having persuaded no precious soul to seek a better portion than the most flattering prospects of earth can yield; having by a godly life and conversation allured no one into the paths of piety and everlasting peace. No, the dear, venerable servant of God whose preaching was listened to with a respect, which, I apprehend, is seldom witnessed now, had many souls given him as seals of his ministry, and stars in his crown of rejoicing.

But with my old friend, and school companion, "Susy" Collingwood, now Mrs. Walker, let us visit the quiet resting place of the dead. Here among the shrubs and

flowers, which have been planted by the hand of affection, and are often watered by her tears, sleep many of the loved ones of other days. Among them I read the names of Thomas Smith, William Collingwood, Mary Collingwood, Mary C. Aiken, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. and her little son, who, in a few months after his mother's departure, followed her to heaven.

"You have much, my dear Susan, to attract you heavenward, and many sacred remembrances to stimulate you to the diligent performance of the duties before you here."

"Yes, many," she replied; "the christian example of my parents is a rich legacy. Their faith and practice, I wish to make my own in training my little family for this world and the next. You recollect my mother; her steadfast, unwavering, child-like confidence in God, her covenant keeping God."

"Yes, and I presume it did not diminish as she drew nearer to the full fruition of her hopes."

Mrs. W. No; her path was truly "the path of the just, which as a shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Her faith in the promises of God grew stronger; and though called away before all her children were gathered into the fold of Christ, she expressed her entire confidence that she should meet us all in heaven. Since her death James and Henry have become decidedly pious, and now, as the result of God's blessing upon parental faithfulness, we are all, I trust, seeking to know and do his will. He will surely have respect to his covenant. Well do I remember the fervor and earnestness with which my dear mother used to plead the promises of God in behalf of her children. She was for many years our only instructor in the family, my father having died in about two and a half years after the "great revival," and before any of us, except Mary and myself, had indulged a hope in Christ. Dear Mary, she seemed from early childhood to love the Saviour. She made

a public profession of religion at that time, but she could not tell when the work of grace was commenced in her soul. I believe it was at a very early period of her life. You recollect her tenderness of conscience when we were playmates and school-mates together, Emily, how careful not to do wrong, and how penitent when she feared her light and happy heart had betrayed her into levity and sin. Do you remember the day when we went down to that little babbling brook just below the old red school-house, and laid ourselves down on the green grass beside it, to listen to its 'discourse,' as it went leaping, frolicking along over the stones, or calmly, and quietly poured its liquid treasures into the tiny basin, where we used to wish the little trout *would* come and live." We had listened to the sweet music of that dear little brook, till we might well imagine that the angels were whispering to us, when Mary started up and with a low earnest voice called; "Susy, hark, I almost think

I can hear the angels whispering to us;" and then half reclining on her grassy couch, with one finger on her lips, she closed her eyes for a moment, and then continued; "Yes, they *are* whispering to my *heart*, 'God is good, God is good, and all that he has made is good.' Shall we be naughty, Susy, dear, Emily, shall we not try to be good too?" She grew up, the meek and gentle, yet joyous creature that she was in childhood; the very counterpart of our dear mother. God gave her a happy home, and a kind and pious husband, when she went from us. Their earthly prospects were very fair. But her heavenly Father had a fairer portion in store for her, in a holier, happier home among the angels and glorified spirits; which in less than two years after her marriage, she was called to enjoy. One of her last acts was to give up to the Lord in baptism, her darling little James. He was soon permitted to follow her, and then his little form was brought over from B. to await by his mother's side the sound of the last trumpet."

“And Mr. Smith is gone too, I see, what was the result of his anxious inquiry after duty?”

Mrs. W. Just what we might expect, my friend, he and his wife became decided and established in their views of duty, and very soon afterwards came forward and united themselves with the church, and dedicated their children to God in baptism. That solemn consecration seemed to produce a very salutary effect upon them all. It was never forgotten. Mr. and Mrs. Smith seemed to realize more than almost any couple that I ever knew, the bearing of the present upon the future, upon eternity. They seemed to feel the importance of training up their children in the way they should go; of improving the present, *now*; and they experienced the blessing of God upon their efforts. Their children have all given evidence in early life, of a change of heart; and are occupying responsible and useful stations in life. Lucius early devoted himself to the work of the

ministry, and at the last day, I have no doubt, he will be found to have done much good. Ellen has spent many years in teaching; eternity alone will disclose the result of her efforts to win the young to the knowledge and love of Christ. Susan is married, and Mrs. Smith, whose home is now a desolate one, spends much of her time with this justly dear daughter; though George says;—you remember that little laughing rosy cheeked “Georgy,” for whom we used to gather the early plums and berries, and then beg the privilege of leading him to school. Well, he is now an enterprising, pious mechanic in S. He is not yet established in business, but has a fair prospect before him, and if providence favors his plans, he will probably be settled in a year or two, with our “little Fanny” as his wife; and his mother as a permanent guest. I expect however, that Susan will hardly consent to the latter arrangement, and Mrs. Smith will more probably divide her time between her youngest son and daughter.

Mr. Smith died in a very peaceful, happy manner a few years ago, but not till he had seen all his children taking hold by faith of the covenant into which he had entered on their behalf. He, and my dear father used often to take sweet counsel together after Mr. Smith's conversion, and my mother and Mrs. Smith were very dear friends. My parents entered much earlier into the service of the Redeemer, and the Smiths seemed to look to them oftentimes for advice and encouragement; while at the same time, their consistent, heartwarm piety, and their prayers, the outpourings of faith and love, were valued aids to my dear parents in their christian walk, so long as they lived. After my father's death, Mr. Smith was the *christian* friend to our family, evincing by his conduct, that he understood what pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father, requires of its adherents. .

“And here a costly marble marks the last resting place of Emily Baynton; did

she ever find the Saviour, whom she once professed to be anxiously seeking?"

Mrs. W. There was no reason to hope that she did; but you are mistaken in supposing that her remains lie here. When, in defiance of the best medical skill, disease continued its inroads upon her delicate constitution, she was advised, as a last resort, to try the effects of a milder climate. She went accordingly to one of our Southern cities, where, like many others in similar circumstances, instead of health, she found a grave.

"Ah, yes, I had not read the inscription, when I spoke of her; poor Emily, was there no change?"

Mrs. W. It was nearly two years from the commencement of her illness to its fatal termination; yet, in all that time, I am not aware that she made any preparation for the event. Her only anxiety seemed to be to recover her health. For the attainment of this object no pains or expense were spared; but in vain. The summons had gone forth and could not be recalled.

Her brothers and sister, who were all, as you may recollect, seriously impressed at the time when Emily's attention was awakened to the subject of religion, have never since, to my knowledge made any effort to add to their possessions, that which God will not despise, "a broken heart and a contrite spirit;" but the world, the world and its fleeting treasures have seemed to be the all engrossing objects of their pursuit. Ah, Emily, it is extremely hazardous to trifle with the influences of the Holy Spirit; to live through a revival of religion without securing a personal interest in Christ. I have been interested at times, in looking over the history of those who worshiped with us at "the old meeting-house" during the revival in 182- and I can recollect scarcely an individual, of whom I know *any thing*, who had then arrived at years of discretion, and did not share in the work of grace, that has since become pious. In most cases, they seem to have settled down in a state of apathy and indifference that is

truly alarming. I believe it was a fearful truth that Mr. Green used to declare to us then; that a revival of religion was emphatically "a sealing time." While some are sealed heirs of the grace of God; others, in consequence of their more aggravated obstinacy and rebellion against the Holy Spirit, are sealed for eternal banishment from the presence of God and all good; and they pass on to the end of their race unmoved by the most urgent appeals of truth to their consciences, now seared as with a hot iron.

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. Isa. 6: 9. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Matt. 13: 14, 15.

“After thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath.” Rom. 2: 5.
“And the Lord said; My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Gen. 6: 3. “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Heb. 3: 15.

CHAPTER V.

The old burying-ground.—Daniel Austin.—Dark future.—Janet Lamson.—Anne Temple.—The end of the righteous desirable.—Mrs. Henderson.—A mother's silent influence.—Covenant blessings realized by her children. Author's conversation with a Baptist clergyman.—Conviction of the truth, and confirmation of her belief.—God owns and blesses his children in their covenant relations.—Scripture.

“For what is your life: it is even a vapor, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”
JAMES 4: 14.

THAT old burying-ground; how many long forgotten incidents come thronging one's memory at thoughts of it. How many there await the resurrection morn, who began life with me, and with much fairer prospects of continuing long in the race. Full of buoyant hopes and pleasing anticipations they started on their journey, and for a time it was well with them; it was

well with *us*; at least, we thought so, for care, sober care, and sorrow, save that which arose from the necessity of writing "compositions" at school, or some other cause equally trivial, were all at a distance. Dim, shadowy forms, which we could not, and would not believe would ever darken our pathway. One teacher, during two winters of that most thoughtless period, often strove to enlighten us a little upon our true relations as immortal beings, but thoughtless, careless most of us remained. I hope he has more success, as the untiring, devoted minister of Jesus Christ, which he has been for many years, in turning sinners from their folly at the West.

But a change came over us. One was missing from *that class*. "Where is Daniel Austin?" "Sick, very sick, of brain fever." A few days passed in anxious suspense, and the tidings came,—"*He is dead.*" The grave was opened, and a lad of much promise, one whom his friends had already seen occupying a high seat among the dis-

tinguished men of future days, was laid away from our sight. But was this all; was it only his absence that sent the ice-chills to our hearts, and made us afraid, almost, to speak his name? Ah, no; there were sad misgivings respecting his everlasting welfare; and we felt, each one of us, I believe, that we had helped to make him what he was,—thoughtless of God or eternity.

We had scarcely recovered from this shock, when another grave was made. Oh, how suddenly was Janet Loomis summoned away into the world of spirits. She thought not of *danger*, till called to grapple with *death*. Then hastily assembling parents, brothers, and sisters around her bed, she begged them with her dying breath to take warning by her sad condition. Youth, health, beauty, and the adulations of many friends, could not stay the hand of death. “Prepare now to die. Oh, do not live as I have done. Mother, do not let my sisters love dress as I have loved it, and indulged in it; ah the folly, the madness of such a

course. Think of death; of the shroud, in which you must soon be robed for the grave; think of eternity, and prepare to meet your God. I have wasted my life, I have hardly thought of dying; but I *must die.*"

Such were the last words of one who had neglected but one thing of any importance, and that the only thing which could secure her happiness for *eternity*. Oh that word, *eternity*. Would that I could make the words of solemn warning, which come up to me from these graves of my early friends, heard by all the young, who are carelessly saying: "Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Ah, many, I fear, are thus sporting over an open grave. May they see their danger before it is too late.

Again, I see in that home of the dead, the name of a youthful friend. She was not the wittiest, the gayest, nor the most beautiful in our little coterie; and was not always noticed, except by the eye of Him, who loves to look upon the humble,

and delights to find an abode in the heart of the contrite. Sorrow's blighting influence was early felt by Anne Temple;—we called it blighting; for it paled the roses of health on her cheeks, and then kindled there a fitful flush, which burned deeper and deeper, till the springs of life were dried up, and Anne too, laid down in the cold grave. But the grave had no terror for her; it was but the gateway to heaven; a narrow passage to that city whose streets are paved with gold, whose gates are pearl, whose inhabitants never say “I am sick;” and He, who is the light thereof, was her Friend, and had gone himself through the same passage to prepare for her a mansion in his Father's house: and now He had come to receive her to himself. Oh, no, death had no terrors for Anne Temple; and *we all* wished that our last end might be like *hers*.

“ And oft, at such an hour as this,
Thy memory shall a presence be,
To fit my soul to share thy bliss,
And dwell eternally with thee.”

“In memory of Mrs. Ruth Henderson, who died January 9, 18—, aged 42 years.”

“Ah, well do I remember her. The mother of a large family of children, when she made a profession of religion, and a very timid, retiring woman, but unshrinking in the path of duty. She came out alone, gave herself first to her Saviour, and then consecrated her children to him in the sacred ordinance of baptism. It seems she lived about nine years after that event. Can you tell me any thing of her, or her family? Did her husband continue impenitent?”

Mrs. W. Yes, he remained impenitent, but never opposed his wife, or hindered intentionally her efforts for the spiritual welfare of her family. While she lived, she endeavored to be faithful to her vows, and her last days were tranquil and happy. She knew in whom she had believed, and calmly committed herself and her children, some of whom were quite young, to his care. She died in peace, and God has remembered his covenant with her, and

blessed her numerous family. Six out of eleven, have become hopefully pious, one of whom, while a mere child, was called away by death, but gave delightful evidence of a preparation for the event. To her, death was indeed "a messenger sent to call her home from banishment." The whole family have been very prosperous. I sometimes think it is in answer to the prayers of that humble saint, whose virtues were never obtruded on the public eye. She lived at home; labored at home; prayed in her closet at home; but her influence is wide and extending. Sons and daughters have risen up to bless her memory; though while she lived, few knew her worth; and perhaps few now, who esteem and highly honor her children, appreciate the influence which moulded and impressed the characters they love to praise. But she has her reward. Each sigh, each tear, her Saviour marked,

Each humble prayer before his throne
Like incense sweet arose.

It is delightful truly, my dear Emily, in this light, to look at the results of the revival in 182-. How many who then gave themselves to the Lord, and consecrated their households to him in baptism, have since been permitted to rejoice in the conversion of those children. The fact that God does so evidently own and bless this ordinance, is additional proof to my mind that it is one of his own appointing.

“ Yes, and how precious the encouragement thus afforded to the Christian parent, who endeavors to be faithful to his trust. Circumstances which were very annoying to me at the time, have led me recently to notice more particularly, the faithfulness, the kindness of our covenant-keeping God. Some two years since, I was a guest for a day or two in the family of a Baptist clergyman, who, during the first evening of my visit, introduced the subject of infant baptism, and in a very pleasant, but decided manner, challenged me to a defence of it. The week, which I was just closing at his house, had been one of great mental and

physical effort, and I felt hardly capable of thinking or speaking upon any important subject; but of course he could not appreciate this, and pressed the matter pretty hard. I did not satisfy myself so well in replying to his inquiries and objections, I believe, as I did him. For I fear I led him to feel more confirmed in the belief that he was right in the opinion which he expressed; that with the majority of those who practice infant baptism, it is a form gone through with because it is the custom in our churches; but an ordinance for which we cannot give any good scriptural reason; and consequently, do not feel under any very solemn obligations to perform it, or act in reference to it afterwards. I believe he thought that we were becoming in fact, more enlightened upon the subject, and presently, perhaps at no very distant day, should get round about right, and discontinue the practice altogether. I think what he said was very nearly to this effect.

The conversation of that evening, though under the circumstances, very unpleasant

to me, led me to think more of the subject than I had ever done before. I had not myself made diligent search for Scriptural arguments in favor of infant baptism, though I had esteemed it a precious privilege, as well as a sacred duty to carry the babe to the baptismal font, and dedicate it to the triune God. I had loved to plead for *covenant blessings* on the child thus consecrated, and felt a confidence that the blessings promised "to the father of all them that believe, and his seed," belong to the Christian parent and his children, if he is faithful to perform his part of the covenant. A confidence, which the conversation referred to, did not remove.

But I was led by it to look over the past, to call up what I had heard upon the subject; to read for myself attentively what the Word of inspiration contains respecting it; and to look at the history of those whom I have known, that respected the covenant, and I have been delighted, confirmed in my belief, and encouraged by what I have seen and learned of God's

dealings with his children. Imperfect and unfaithful as Christian parents have been in their efforts to train their children for heaven, God has wonderfully blessed them in their feeble endeavors. I cannot believe that He would thus distinguish those who were acting in opposition to his will, when they gave up their little ones to Him in the solemn ordinance of baptism, however sincere they might be in doing it. *Sincerity* in error, does not render it acceptable to God. And this would be a profanation of his holy name, which He could not bless. And another thing I have observed; God appears to have been most gracious to those parents who have been most scrupulous in the performance of this duty, setting the highest value upon it, and never losing sight of it in the training of their children. Your mother, my dear Susan, was one of those, and her success, with the Divine blessing, was just what we might expect from the faithfulness of that Being in whom she put her confidence.”

Mrs. W. Yes, and her children’s chil-

dren enjoy the benefit of her pious example and her prayers. I often feel that to the faith and prayers of my dear mother, under God, more than to my own, I am indebted for the evidence of piety, which so cheers my heart in my little Olivia. The day of her public consecration to God, was a deeply interesting one to her dear grandmother, by whom, I believe, she was presented in the arms of faith to her covenant God and Redeemer; and the consecration was often renewed, while she was spared to us. For "children's children" she loved to plead the promises. May she be permitted to welcome them to her own bright and glorious home beyond the skies.

"The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." Ps. 102: 28. "Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." Ps. 128: 6.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. 126: 6.

“O that there was such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever.” Deut. 5: 29.

H Y M N .

How large the promise ! how divine !
To Abraham and his seed !
“ I'll be a God to thee and thine,
Supplying all their need.”

The words of his extensive love
From age to age endure ;
The angel of the covenant proves,
And seals the blessings sure.

Jesus the ancient faith confirms
To our great father given ;
He takes young children in his arms
He calls them heirs of heaven.

Our God !—how faithful are his ways !
His love endures the same ;
Nor from the promise of his grace
Blots out our children's name.

H Y M N .

Behold what condescending love
Jesus on earth displays !
To babes and sucklings he extends
The riches of his grace !

He still the ancient promise keeps,
To our forefathers given ;
Young children in his arms he takes,
And calls them heirs of heaven.

Forbid them not, whom Jesus calls,
Nor dare the claim resist,
Since his own lips to us declare
Of such will heaven consist.

With flowing tears, and thankful hearts
We give them up to thee ;
Receive them, Lord, into thine arms ;
Thine may they ever be.

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~~~~~ THE END. ~~~~~  
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